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ABSTRACT

A brief description is provided of ways in which vocational programs have been modified for handicapped students at Portsmouth High School (New Hampshire). Examples are: (1) regular vocational programs with support services and modification curriculum; (2) special vocational programs in which pre-vocational entry level skills are developed prior to integration into regular vocational programs; and (3) self-contained vocational programs designed for the more severely handicapped. Career education and work experience are seen as valuable components to all vocational programs. Twenty-one instructional strategies and curriculum modifications are listed to assist educators in making materials more relevant and appropriate for students with special needs. Using contract grading, evaluating the reading level of materials used, taping lectures, using pictures to describe processes, providing for repetition, and giving only one or two instructions at a time are examples of suggested instructional strategies. In addition, a cooperative effort between vocational instructors and specialists from other subject areas is recommended. (LH)

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INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR VOCATIONAL/SPECIAL NEEDS

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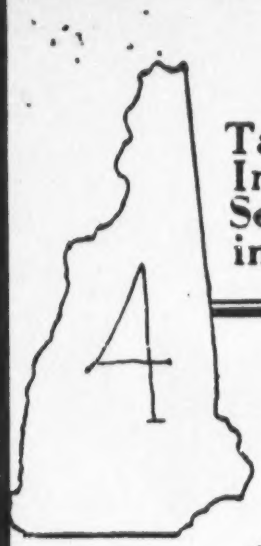

Task Force for the Improvement of Secondary Special Education in New Hampshire

RESOURCE PAPER NO. 4

c/o Special Education Section, N.H. Department of Education
105 Loudon Road, Bldg. # 3, Concord, N.H. 03301

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR VOCATIONAL/SPECIAL NEEDS

The current trend in educating handicapped students is to integrate them into programs that are designed for non-handicapped students. There are a variety of ways programs can be modified for handicapped students. Curriculum can be adapted, specialized materials and equipment can be utilized, consultants' skills may be used and school staff members can take advantage of in-service offerings which will assist them with instructional strategies. With the implementation of Public Law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, more and more vocational teachers will be involved in programs for handicapped students in public schools. Only if these teachers feel that they are able to provide positive and appropriate experiences for a student with special needs, will that student benefit from placement in that program. It is important that the teacher be knowledgeable, well prepared, and aware of individual students' needs, if students are to be expected to succeed within regular education and vocational education programs. College training programs and school systems alike need to examine their pre-service and in-service programs and to determine the ways in which appropriate training and/or experience should be provided for teachers who will be dealing with handicapped students on a daily basis in their programs. Vocational training available to handicapped students may vary from one school to the next depending on the resources of individual school systems. Examples of the kinds of vocational programs that are provided at Portsmouth High School for handicapped students are:

1. Regular vocational programs with support services - curriculum may be modified for individual learning styles and students and may or may not receive tutorial assistance for vocational coursework.

2. Special vocational program - Students develop pre-vocational/vocational skills that prepare them for integration into regular vocational programs at a later time. There is a transitional component to this model that allows students to gain the necessary entry level skills that will insure success within the regular vocation curricula. Examples are: Diversified Occupations (DO) which is available to non-handicapped students as well as Handicapped and is multi-occupational, and Special Training for Employment Programs (STEP)

3. Self-contained vocational program - This is the primary program designed for the more severely handicapped student. This program has the same goals and objectives as regular Vocational programs and is either 2 or 4 years in duration, usually in conjunction with a program of related academics.

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All of these programs have career education and work experience components as part of the overall program. On-the-job training consisting of actual work experience with an employer or in the school also is a possibility, but the school and work experiences should be very closely coordinated, and carefully supervised by school officials to ensure success.

Suggestions for curriculum modification and instructional practices that can assist educators with the task of making materials more relevant and appropriate for a class which has students with different abilities include:

- Set goals for each student and discuss expectations of the program/ curriculum when the class begins.
- Use contract-grading which allows students some input and gives them responsibility that is clearly understood by student and teacher.
- Evaluate the reading level of your text or materials. Provide these materials in different reading levels.
- Have lectures or required information available on tape.
- Provide worksheets that describe a process or task in pictures or diagrams rather than having the student read a manual or text.
- Break tasks into simple, less complicated steps.
- Have your material printed in large type or different colored ink. For example: Key vocabulary words underlined or all in capital letters.
- Provide a glossary or index of important terms.
- Organizational learning depends on varying degrees of repetition. Students may have to describe a task and indicate the steps after you have initially presented the material.
- Avoid strategies such as the use of charts. Tables or calculators should be allowed for the students having difficulty with pencil/ paper tasks.
- Present materials in an organized manner. A step by step process will help.
- When lecturing, write key words on the board or draw diagrams.
- Use oral testing for students who are able to explain a process orally but not in writing.
- Allow students to assist in correcting papers. This provides for some repetition of material.
- Make use of visual equipment such as overhead projectors to enlarge diagrams of flow charts.
- Make sure all directions are clear.

- Review subject matter with students previous to tests and allow for questions.
- Give specific instructions, only one or two at a time rather than giving the complete list of tasks all at once.
- Read directions to the class.
- Reinforce previous material learned so students see a sequence of tasks or learning activities.
- Don't be afraid to praise students for a job well done (a compliment goes a long way)

This is by no means a complete list of instructional strategies. It is only intended as a sample of ideas for the vocational instructor to consider when presenting his/her curriculum in any vocational area to students who may have different learning styles. Suggestions such as evaluating the readability of instructional materials can be accomplished by checking with the vocational director, vocational/special needs specialist or reading teacher. Vocational teachers and all specialists need to work very closely together, providing each other with the necessary information regarding any student with special needs who is integrated in a vocational area. The programming of students with special needs no longer is accomplished by any one person in a school. Federal and State laws emphasizing placement into programs that are designed for the non-handicapped means that all teachers must communicate more and assist each other so that each student's program is provided via a team approach.

Biographical Data

Bob Lister is the Special Education Department Chairman at Portsmouth High School in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He graduated from Keene State College and the University of New Hampshire and received his doctorate from Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. Some of his interests include teacher education, designing programs for adolescent populations, and Special Olympics.

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Washburn, W.Y. Vocational mainstreaming. Novato, CA: Academic Therapy Publications, 1979.

Resources

The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, Virginia 22091.

Learning Resource Center, Mason Library, Keene State College, Keene, New Hampshire 03431.
Dorothea Kitlan, Director. Tel. 352-1909, ext. 236.

National Association of Vocational Special Needs Personnel, 1510 "H" Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20005.

National Center on Educational Media and Materials for the Handicapped, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. 43210.

New Hampshire Department of Vocational-Technical Education, Special Services-Handicapped, Concord, New Hampshire. 03301.
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